

## Case 2969

***Bombycilla cedrorum* Vieillot, [1808] and *Troglodytes aedon* Vieillot, [1809] (Aves, Passeriformes): proposed conservation of the specific names**

M. Ralph Browning & Richard C. Banks

National Biological Service, National Museum of Natural History,  
MRC 111, Washington, D.C. 20560-0111, U.S.A.

**Abstract.** The purpose of this application is to conserve the specific names of *Bombycilla cedrorum* Vieillot, [1808] for the cedar waxwing (family BOMBYCILLIDAE) and of *Troglodytes aedon* Vieillot, [1809] for the North American house wren (family TROGLODYTIDAE). The names are threatened by the little used senior subjective synonyms *Ampelis americana* and *Sylvia domestica* respectively, both of Wilson (1808).

**Keywords.** Nomenclature; taxonomy; Aves; cedar waxwing; North American house wren; *Bombycilla cedrorum*; *Troglodytes aedon*.

---

1. Wilson (1808, p. 107, pl. 7, fig. 1) described, illustrated and named the cedar waxwing as *Ampelis americana* and (p. 129, pl. 8, fig. 3) the North American house wren as *Sylvia domestica*. He gave the locality of *A. americana* as Philadelphia and other parts of Pennsylvania and Canada, and noted that it was 'also found as far south as Mexico'. (The bird breeds in the northern United States and subarctic Canada and winters from southern Canada to the Greater Antilles and northern South America). The locality of *S. domestica* was given as Pennsylvania. Hellmayr (1935, p. 104) gave the type locality of *A. americana* as Pennsylvania, and Oberholser (1934, p. 87) gave that of *S. domestica* as Philadelphia.

2. Vieillot ([1808], p. 88, pl. 57) described, illustrated and named the cedar waxwing as the new genus and species *Bombycilla cedrorum*, and gave the locality as 'en Amérique depuis le Canada jusqu'au Mexique'. The type locality was equated to eastern North America by the American Ornithologists' Union (A.O.U.) (1931, p. 270) and was further restricted to Pennsylvania by Burleigh (1963, p. 178). Vieillot ([1809], p. 52, pl. 107) also described, illustrated and named the North American house wren as *Troglodytes aedon*. No locality was given. The type locality was given as northeastern North America by Oberholser (1904, p. 201), who later restricted it to New York City (Oberholser, 1934, p. 87). Vieillot ([1809]) included two nominal species (*aedon* and *arundinaceus*) in his new genus *Troglodytes*; Baird (1858, p. 366) designated *aedon* as the type species.

3. The specific name of *Ampelis americana* Wilson was listed as a junior synonym of *Bombycilla cedrorum* Vieillot in standard synonymies (see, for example, Ridgway, 1904, p. 112; Hellmayr, 1935, p. 104) because the latter name was considered to have priority over *americana*. The date of publication of the name *cedrorum* was given by several early authors (for example, A.O.U., 1895, p. 260; Ridgway, 1904, p. 111) as

1807, the date on the title page of vol. 1 of Vieillot's *Histoire naturelle des oiseaux de l'Amerique septentrionale*. Similarly, the date of publication of the name *Troglodytes aedon* Vieillot was believed by Oberholser (1904) and others to be 1807.

4. The date of the part of Vieillot's publication that contained *Bombycilla cedrorum* has been shown to be September 1808 (see, for example, Hellmayr, 1935, p. 104 and Browning & Monroe, 1991, p. 396). Since the precise date in the month is unknown it must be taken as 30 September (Article 21c of the Code). Volume 1 of Wilson's *American Ornithology*, which included *Ampelis americana*, was published before 21 September 1808 (see Faxon, 1901, p. 216; Hunter, 1983). The specific name of *americana* has had very limited usage (see references in Ridgway, 1904, p. 112) and is not in current use. The description and illustration of *americana* Wilson cannot be identified with either the northern or western subspecies of *B. cedrorum*. The name *B. cedrorum* Vieillot, [1808] has been universally used in recent publications (see, for example, Greenway, 1960, p. 371; A.O.U., 1983, p. 581; Godfrey, 1986, p. 440; Sibley & Monroe, 1990, p. 506). We propose that the usage of Vieillot's name *cedrorum* be maintained by the suppression of *americana* Wilson.

5. The name *Troglodytes domesticus* (Wilson, 1808) was listed as a synonym of *T. aedon* Vieillot, '1807' by Ridgway (1904, p. 581), Oberholser (1904, p. 201) and Hellmayr (1934, p. 217), who all believed the name *aedon* to have priority (para. 3 above). Subsequently Oberholser (1934) pointed out that the name *domestica* has priority over *aedon* because Wilson's *American ornithology* was issued in 1808 but the part of Vieillot's *Histoire naturelle des oiseaux de l'Amerique septentrionale* that contained *T. aedon* was not issued until May 1809. Oberholser (1974, pp. 992-993) restated these dates and the priority of *domestica*. Browning and Monroe (1991, p. 396) confirmed the priority of *domestica*.

6. Phillips (1962, p. 345) and Phillips, Marshall & Monson (1964, p. 117) used the name *Troglodytes aedon*, but later Monson & Phillips (1981, p. 126) and Phillips (1986, p. 141) adopted *T. domesticus* for the same species. In contrast, however, the name *Troglodytes domesticus* was used by Oberholser (1934; 1974, pp. 631, 992-993), Aldrich & Bole (1937, p. 113), Sutton & Burleigh (1940, p. 240), Huey (1942, p. 368), Sutton & Pettingill (1943, p. 283), Brandt (1951, p. 677) and Rea (1983, p. 205), some of whom (Aldrich, in Jewett, Taylor, Shaw & Aldrich, 1953, p. 495; Burleigh, 1958, p. 422; 1972, p. 269; Sutton, 1967, p. 406) subsequently adopted *T. aedon* for the taxon. Virtually every major taxonomic compilation has continued the use of *aedon*, including (but not limited to) A.O.U. (1957, p. 406; 1983, p. 531), Miller, Friedmann, Griscom & Moore (1957, p. 161), Paynter (1960, p. 422), Wolters (1980, p. 432), Godfrey (1986, p. 410) and Sibley & Monroe (1990, p. 562). Likewise, dozens of studies of behavior, ecology and physiology by Kendeigh (see, for example, Kendeigh, 1952) and his students, and virtually every other non-taxonomic compilation, have continued the use of *T. aedon* for the species, one of the most well studied birds of North America. We propose that the specific name *domestica* Wilson, 1808 be suppressed to allow the maintenance of the current usage of *T. aedon* Vieillot, [1809].

7. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary powers to suppress the following specific names for the purposes of the Principle of Priority but not for those of the Principle of Homonymy:

- (a) *americana* Wilson, 1808, as published in the binomen *Ampelis americana*;
- (b) *domestica* Wilson, 1808, as published in the binomen *Sylvia domestica*;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the following names:
  - (a) *Bombycilla* Vieillot, [1808] (gender: feminine), type species by monotypy *Bombycilla cedrorum* Vieillot, [1808];
  - (b) *Troglodytes* Vieillot, [1809] (gender: masculine), type species by subsequent designation by Baird (1858) *Troglodytes aedon* Vieillot, [1809];
- (3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the following names:
  - (a) *cedrorum* Vieillot, [1808], as published in the binomen *Bombycilla cedrorum* (specific name of the type species of *Bombycilla* Vieillot, [1808]);
  - (b) *aedon* Vieillot, [1809], as published in the binomen *Troglodytes aedon* (specific name of the type species of *Troglodytes* Vieillot, [1809]);
- (4) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology the following names:
  - (a) *americana* Wilson, 1808, as published in the binomen *Ampelis americana* and as suppressed in (1)(a) above;
  - (b) *domestica* Wilson, 1808, as published in the binomen *Sylvia domestica* and as suppressed in (1)(b) above.

## References

- Aldrich, J.W. & Bole, B.P., Jr. 1937. The birds and mammals of the western slope of the Azuero Peninsula (Republic of Panama). *Scientific Publications of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History*, 7: 1–198.
- American Ornithologists' Union. 1895. *Check-list of North American birds*. Ed. 2. 372 pp. American Ornithologists' Union, New York.
- American Ornithologists' Union. 1931. *Check-list of North American birds*. Ed. 4. 691 pp. American Ornithologists' Union, Lancaster, Pennsylvania.
- American Ornithologists' Union. 1957. *Check-list of North American birds*. Ed. 5. 691 pp. American Ornithologists' Union, Baltimore.
- American Ornithologists' Union. 1983. *Check-list of North American birds*. Ed. 6. 877 pp. American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C.
- Baird, S.F. 1858. Birds of North America. *Pacific Railroad Reports. Reports of Explorations and Surveys for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, 1853–6*, 9(2): 1–1005.
- Brandt, H. 1951. *Arizona and its bird life*. 723 pp. Bird Research Foundation, Cleveland.
- Browning, M.R. & Monroe, B.L., Jr. 1991. Clarifications and corrections of the dates of issue of some publications containing descriptions of North American birds. *Archives of Natural History*, 18(3): 381–405.
- Burleigh, T.D. 1958. *Georgia birds*. 746 pp. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
- Burleigh, T.D. 1963. Geographic variation in the cedar waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*). *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington*, 76: 177–180.
- Burleigh, T.D. 1972. *Birds of Idaho*. 467 pp. Caxton Printers, Caldwell, Idaho.
- Faxon, W. 1901. Early editions of Wilson's *Ornithology*. *Auk*, 18: 216–218.
- Godfrey, W.E. 1986. *The birds of Canada*. Ed. 2. 595 pp. National Museums of Canada, Ottawa.
- Greenway, J.C., Jr. 1960. Family Bombycillidae. Pp. 369–373 in Mayr, E. & Greenway, J.C., Jr. (Ed.). *Check-list of birds of the world. A continuation of the work of James L. Peters*, vol. 9. 506 pp. Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Hellmayr, C.E. 1934. 1935. Catalogue of birds of the Americas and the adjacent islands. *Publications of Field Museum of Natural History, Zoological Series*, 13(7): 1–531 (1934); 13(8): 1–541 (1935).

- Huey, L.M. 1942. A vertebrate faunal survey of the Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Arizona. *Transactions of the San Diego Society of Natural History*, **9**: 353-376.
- Hunter, C. (Ed.). 1983. *The life and letters of Alexander Wilson*. 456 pp. American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.
- Jewett, S.G., Taylor, W.P., Shaw, W.T. & Aldrich, J.W. 1953. *Birds of Washington State*. 767 pp. University of Washington Press, Seattle.
- Kendeigh, S.C. 1952. Parental care and its evolution in birds. *Illinois Biological Monographs*, **2**(1-3): 1-356.
- Miller, A.H., Friedmann, H., Griscom, L. & Moore, R.T. 1957. Distributional check-list of the birds of Mexico, part 2. *Pacific Coast Avifauna*, **33**. 436 pp.
- Monson, G. & Phillips, A.R. 1981. *Annotated checklist of the birds of Arizona*. 240 pp. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.
- Oberholser, H.C. 1904. A review of the wrens of the genus *Troglodytes*. *Proceedings of the United States National Museum*, **27**: 197-211.
- Oberholser, H.C. 1934. A revision of North American house wrens. *Ohio Journal of Science*, **34**(1): 86-96.
- Oberholser, H.C. 1974. *The bird life of Texas*. 2 vols. 1069 pp. University of Texas Press, Austin.
- Paynter, R.A. 1960. Family Troglodytidae. Pp. 379-440 in Mayr, E. & Greenway, J.C., Jr. (Eds.), *Check-list of birds of the world. A continuation of the work of James L. Peters*, vol. 9. 506 pp. Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Phillips, A.R. 1962. Notas sistematicas sobre Aves Mexicanas. I. *Anales del Instituto de Biologia*, **32**: 333-381.
- Phillips, A.R. 1986. *The known birds of North and Middle America*, part 1. lxi, 259 pp. Author, Denver.
- Phillips, A.R., Marshall, J. & Monson, G. 1964. *The birds of Arizona*. 212 pp. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.
- Rea, A.M. 1983. *Once a river: bird life and habitat changes on the Middle Gila*. xiv, 285 pp. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.
- Ridgway, R. 1904. The birds of North and Middle America, part 3. *Bulletin of the United States National Museum*, **50**: 1-801.
- Sibley, C.G. & Monroe, B.L., Jr. 1990. *Distribution and taxonomy of birds of the world*. 1111 pp. Yale University Press, New Haven.
- Sutton, G.M. 1967. *Oklahoma birds*. 674 pp. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
- Sutton, G.M. & Burleigh, T.D. 1940. Birds of Las Vigas, Veracruz. *Auk*, **57**: 234-243.
- Sutton, G.M. & Pettingill, O.S., Jr. 1943. Birds of Linares and Galeana, Nuevo León, Mexico. *Occasional Papers of the Museum of Zoology, Louisiana State University*, **16**: 273-291.
- Vieillot, L.-P. 1807-[1809]. *Histoire naturelle des oiseaux de l'Amérique septentrionale* ..., vol. 1, iv, 8, 90 pp., pls. 1-57 (1807 [1808]); vol. 2, ii, 74 pp., pls. 57 bis, 58-124 ([1808]-[1809]). Desfray, Paris.
- Wilson, A. 1808. *American ornithology; or, the natural history of the birds of the United States*, vol. 1. 158 pp., pls. 1-9. Bradford & Inskeep, Philadelphia.
- Wolters, H.E. 1977-80. *Die Vogelarten der Erde*, vols. 3-6. Parey, Hamburg & Berlin.